

close upon 20,000 men. Paris and Lyons were strongly fortified, and it was supposed by many that Napoleon, contrary to his usual tactics, would remain on the defensive, but he adopted the bolder alternative of attacking the Allies before they should become too formidable by combination. On the 7th of June the French army began to move at Valenciennes. At four o'clock in the morning of the 12th Napoleon left Paris to join the army. On arriving at Laon the same evening he inspected the city and ramparts. The next day he proceeded to Avesnes, and on the 14th rode to Beaumont, whence, on the same day, being the anniversary of the battles of Marengo and Friedland, he addressed the following energetic proclamation to his army : —

SOLDIERS ! —This day is the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe. Then, as after the battles of Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous. We believed in the protestations and oaths of Princes, to whom we left their thrones. Now, however, leagued together, they strike at the independence and sacred rights of France. They have committed unjust aggressions. Let us march forward and meet them. Are we not still the same men? Soldiers! at Jfna these Prussians, now so arrogant, were three to one; at Mont-mirail six to one. Let those who have been captives to the English describe the nature of their prison ships, and the sufferings they endured. The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, lament that they are obliged to use their arms in the cause of Princes who are the enemies of justice and destroyers of the rights of nations. They well know the coalition to be insatiable. After having swallowed up 12,000,000 Poles, 12,000,000 Italians, 1,000,000 Saxons, and 6,000,000 Belgians, they now wish to devour the States of the second order among the Germans. Madmen! one moment of prosperity has bewildered them. To oppress and humble the people of France is out of their power: once entering our territory, there they will find their doom. Soldiers! we have forced marches before us, battles to fight, and dangers to encounter; but, firm in resolution, victory must be ours. The honor and happiness of our country are at stake! and, in short, Frenchmen, the moment is arrived when we must conquer or die!

The positions of the French army at this time were as follows : — The headquarters were at Beaumont, the first corps at Loire-sur-Sambre, second at Ham-sur-Heure, third in front of Beaumont, fourth in front of Philippeville, sixth in front